Ladies and Gentleman,

I am proud to present to you the Capital Battalion’s first volume of Bearings for the Fall Semester of the 2018-2019 school year. Bearings is comprised of articles written by the Capital Battalion’s Midshipmen (MIDN). These articles are able to act as a window for anyone who wishes to see what it is like to be a MIDN in the Nation’s Capital. The authors of these articles have describe the challenges they have over come, the lessons they have learned, and the bonds they have forged during their time as NROTC students. I am grateful for both their contribution to this publication, as well as all the assistance from many other members of the battalion (from the BCO all the way to the XO). I hope you all enjoy these articles as much as I have.

Very Respectfully,

MIDN 2/C Shaw, Bearings Editor-in-Chief
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At the outset of the semester I presented my command philosophy with an emphasis on professional development, character, and respect. I chose these three principles in consultation with the Navy ROTC mission statement, my peers, and the mentorship of our staff.

Throughout this semester I have seen countless instances of midshipmen upholding the command philosophy and striving to develop as future Navy and Marine Corps Officers. While too numerous to list, I would like to highlight several examples:

Upper-class midshipmen took charge of their roles as leaders and mentors, caring about their subordinates and striving to push all members of the Battalion to succeed as students and midshipmen. In particular, several outstanding midshipmen went above and beyond to assist their peers by providing academic support, fitness training, and useful mentorship.

Midshipmen worked hard to plan and execute our second annual Leadership Conference with a focus on military ethics. This conference drove members of the Battalion to be the best version of themselves and understand the code of ethics that forms the backbone of our profession. All members of the Battalion participated in a crisis simulation during the conference by taking on leadership roles, thinking critically, and learning by doing.

I am incredibly proud of the members of the Capital Battalion and their strong work to thrive academically, physically, and morally throughout this semester. I have full confidence that my successor, Midshipman 1/C Aidan Judd, will succeed in leading this Battalion to develop future Navy and Marine Corps officers.

It has been my honor to serve as the Battalion Commanding Officer of the Capital Battalion.
This past semester my fellow fourth class (4/C) and I have been inundated with the most information and responsibilities that many of us have ever had. New Student Orientation (NSO) and the first few weeks of school have been some of the most challenging times of our lives. This is in part because of the fact that transitioning to college is hard for everyone. However, while all college freshmen are faced with new and daunting challenges, the ones that 4/C Midshipmen are faced with are often different from those of a non-NROTC student. However, regardless of these challenges, 4/C MIDN are expected to rise to the occasion and exhibit true perseverance and camaraderie.

Furthermore, in addition to being given the opportunity to push ourselves to the limit, I and my fellow 4/C have been provided structure and incredible experiences would not be available to us if we were civilian students. For example, by being immediately thrown into an incredibly demanding environment, like NSO, I was able to quickly bond with my other MIDN. These MIDN are not only from The George Washington University, but they are also scattered all around DC and the other prestigious schools that are apart of our consortium, like Georgetown, Howard, and Catholic. Being able to go to any of the consortium universities in the DC area and see a friendly face is greatly rewarding.

Not only have my fellow 4/C been helpful during my first semester at GW, but also the Third Class (3/C) MIDN have proven to be extremely helpful as well. I have sought help and guidance from many of the 3/C, and they haven't been able to teach me that through the life of a 4/C isn’t a walk in the park, with the right attitude, the desire to ask questions, and the ability to learn from your mistakes it is possible. My squad leader, in particular, has been an amazing mentor. He has encouraged me to attend reveille and color guard, teaching me to take advantage of my opportunities, as well as to participate in the Unit so as to talk to and learn from fellow MIDN. I also enjoy our weekly trips after color guard practice to carvings, where we discuss SWO, PD events, command climate, and bonding. Without him or the rest of the 3/C, this transition would have been much harder.

The first semester in NROTC has been incredibly rewarding. Being able to meet other MIDN at the leadership conference taught all of us in the Capital Battalion, what the Capital has to offer. Many of us never thought that we’d be able to go to the Pentagon for say, a submarine brief. It has been so amazing seeing my fellow 4/C taking advantage of the unbelievable opportunities we all have been given.
NSO was an eye-opening experience for me, an experience where I realized that I am not perfect. I am pretty sure new Midshipmen do make mistakes, but I made a mistake that would go down in the history of the Capital Battalion. Due to my failure to understand that short is not a pair of pants, I wore my khaki shorts for my SEAS indoctrination day. Thus, I had failed my first assignment. This did not seem like a promising start to my career as a MIDN. Almost immediately after my initial failure, I was confronted a lot of yelling, but also an overwhelming sense of disappointment. For the rest of NSO, I felt terrible, believing that joining NROTC was probably not a good choice for me. As if to emphasize this point during our physical training exercises, I realized that despite my best efforts over the summer I was not in the shape that I needed to be in.

Due to my college programmer status, I had the choice to either continue with NROTC or leave the Unit and have a typical college experience. As much I wanted to stick with it, on the Friday that I departed to finish rest of NSO at Camp Quantico, my will had broken down. As I read a letter of encouragement that my mom wrote to me, before she went back to California, I felt completely defeated. Although I tried to hide my insecurity all throughout the week, I was completely lost and decided to send email to 4/C orientation advisor, withdrawing from the Capital Battalion.

Then the unexpected happened, I received a phone call. My 4/C Orientation Advisor contacted me and encouraged me to with my training. I felt inspired. I realize that I had reached a point where it felt like I could not go any further, so I decided that it was time for me to challenge myself and continue with my training at Quantico. However, that did not mean that the training got any easier. The Instructors were still yelling and demanding perfection from me. And even though my fellow midshipmen and I were barely improving we figured out that teamwork is essential to everything.

In addition to my Advisor’s words of encouragement, the instructors and other orientation staff were generous enough to talk about the battalion, and their lives as college students. As a result of this generosity, I was able to understand that NROTC is a big-time commitment, but with hard determination and support from my fellow midshipmen, I will able to plan out activities and join other clubs within the university. At the end of Quantico, after countless yelling and sharing “EQUAL’S PAIN,” my fellow midshipmen and I successfully became part of the Capital Battalion. I was able to meet my instructor’s “good side” and I was able to get them to know better. In the end, I learned I can handle a tough and demanding situation if I believe in myself and my teammates.
For four years in a row, I had the privilege of taking part in the Capital Battalion's New Student Orientation (NSO). My first year was as an incoming 4/C, taking part in the training and learning; sophomore and junior years were marked by the incredible experience of being a MIDN Instructor, and this past year, I had the phenomenal experience of leading NSO as the Commanding Officer.

For me, commanding NSO has been the culminating evolution of my NROTC experience. It was the singular most difficult but rewarding billet I've held and taught me more about leadership and management than anything else I've done in the unit. For several weeks, I and the rest of the command staff worked to establish a schedule that involved rigorous physical training, basic introductions to the Navy and Marine Corps, and that would accomplish the transition from high school civilian to midshipman for the freshmen. We designed a training period that would primarily challenge the 4/C individually, but teach them that success will never be accomplished alone. In the final days leading up to the 4/C arrival, I watched my staff work tirelessly to make sure we were prepared to implement our combined vision and give the 4/C the experience they deserved. And did we ever.

I consider this past NSO to have been the most mentally and physically challenging one in several years. Every day involved at least one, if not two, decent PT sessions combined with hours of learning the fundamentals of being a member of the NROTC program. The 4/C completed inspections, a drill competition, and a final field meet, all while being introduced to military bearing, knowledge, and customs. To be quite honest, they completely surpassed my expectations. Their willingness to work hard and work together from reveille to lights out motivated the staff to give 110% throughout the entirety of NSO. I watched the 4/C grow into junior, but functioning and welcome members of our Battalion.

However, the most substantial growth I saw was in my staff. I saw the 3/C, still timidly off their own 4/C year, work with senior MIDN to accomplish some of the most important logistics and training that were part of the experience. They seamlessly integrated with the senior staff and gained confidence in their abilities and place in the unit. The 2/C were faced with a unique set of challenges. Some of them were put in leadership positions that involved being in charge of seniors and their fellow juniors, while others were under the charge and direction of their peers. Their initiative and judgment as a whole inspired the entire staff to work harder. They led by example every single day. Those in charge figured out how to engage their authority while being respectful of their peers and contribute to command decisions. Their energy was unmatched. In my opinion, the 2/C members of staff were the cornerstone of the evolution. They directed and demanded in the right ways for the right reasons.

Finally, the 1/C. We as a group filled many different roles, whether it be the command triad, MIDN Instructors, Platoon Sergeants, or department heads. Some of our roles aligned perfectly with our own skills and talents, while others forced some of us to step out of our comfort zones. All of us were challenged. I demanded a lot from my staff, and they delivered. I especially demanded a lot from the 1/C. Those involved in the planning process painstakingly created, reviewed, reviewed again, and then verified that everything was ready as necessary. Those involved with the face-to-face training spent hours outlining their actions and initiatives to make sure they trained the 4/C appropriately without ruining the potential for mentoring them after NSO. It was an opportunity for us to demonstrate how the NROTC program developed us into leaders of men and women, and into confident and competent individuals.
I am very proud to have commanded NSO. The changes and growth exhibited not only in the 4/C but in the staff members gave me a great sense of fulfillment. Everyone surpassed every expectation I had of them. Each person involved pushed him or herself to make the group better, and we grew as a team. For me, this was the first time I felt what it might be like when I become an officer. I hope that others feel the same sense of pride in the 4/C for their transition into the unit and in the staff members for their phenomenal performance. Thank you, to everyone, for your energy and effort. Thank you for your commitment to our vision and our team. Semper fidelis.
MARINE FIELD EXERCISE
MIDN 2/C PATRICK SKAWSKI

The cold October weekend approached quickly The air was crisp and the sun shone down
In MARPATS we stood by loaded vans stoically
With only the air of anticipation around

To Quantico we drove with gear loaded and spirits low
Our camping trip in the woods was far from done
The hour drive made our warm beds feel so long ago
We were prepared to grab our rifles and run

Smith Lake Road greeted us with peace As we were the only platoon in sight We knew the
calm would soon cease So we prepped for a fight
The other schools came, and so did night land nav
All our points were over the hills and far away A memory of a night I wish not to have
How many times I fell down those hills I cannot say

Then back to the bivouac sight we all rode
As we prepped for bed, the night grew cold In the dark of night all activity slowed Unable
to sleep I tossed and rolled

The night brought sickness and rain
As the morning light brought just the same Sick though I was, I trudged on without vane I
tackled the O-Course to uphold my name

After words of wisdom from some NCOs We left for the E-Course
To run the muddy wooden hills of Quantico We overcame each obstacle with great force

Cold and muddy were we
As we stretched and ate chow
We counted the hours till we’d be free
No one got hypothermia, I’m not sure how

And then came SULE, O what joy The 2/C ready with skeletons
It was time for us to forget being boys And pretend to disrupt fake rebellions
The 4/C performed well
And the 3/C stepped up to the plate We were tired, it was not hard to tell But we chose to
be here, not fate
Capt. Jessica Ryan debriefs Marine option MIDN after completing the FEX
On Friday, September 21st, each branch of the military came together at the Pentagon to honor the families of Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action, and to remind us that we will never stop fighting for these individuals. This ceremony stood as a true testament to the beauty and cohesion of the armed forces.

For those in the crowd, it truly felt as though we were witnessing something much larger and greater than ourselves. The evening began with a march-on from all branches of the military, as well as the flags of each state being represented. They moved in perfect unison as if all together they made up one body. This body moved as a dancer would, with grace and precision, but also with intensity and purpose, never losing the rhythm of the steady beating drum. One could feel the energy within this body, and it brought to life all at once feelings of pride, joy, amazement, and awe.

Each part of this body maintained perfect composure as they were passed over for a ceremonial service inspection. Shortly following, the National Anthem was performed, followed by words from the Honorable James Mattis, U.S. Secretary of Defense. With the personal words he spoke, he conveyed the significance and impact of all POW’s/MIA’s with the utmost gratitude to them and also their families, for their unwavering faith and commitment.

“From the tomb of the unknown soldier here in Washington to the Punchbowl in Hawaii, to the Wall of the Missing in Manila and so many other locations, we will never forget our duty to keep searching for those still awaiting their homecoming,” Mattis said.

The audience to whom Mattis spoke was comprised of the families of the POW’s/MIA’s, as well as JROTC and ROTC units, and various other members of the military. While they stayed at their seats the whole ceremony, the attitude of the audience was not merely a passive one. They were not there to simply watch a performance. By being present, each person joined themselves to this body by showing their respect and support for the families, as well as contributed to honoring of the individuals. Each individual also has the responsibility to never give up on those who are prisoners of war and missing in action, because it is our duty to keep fighting for them until they come safely home.

The ceremony concluded with the anthem of each branch played consecutively. When the anthems were played, it united those in the ceremony and the military members in the audience as they stood for their respective anthems.

Seeing every branch work together as a cohesive unit reminded me of the reason why one joins the Armed Forces in the first place. One joins the Armed Forces to be a part of something greater than themselves, and to fight to protect this great nation. One willingly forgets his own self to contribute to the body of the whole military. But if this ceremony showed anything, it served as a reminder that while one may seem to forget himself when he joins the military, the military does not forget him.
“Good morning everyone! Thank you for visiting Georgetown today! My name is Harry, and I’ll be your tour guide today. So on campus, I’m involved in a few different activities; I’m a senator in the Student Association, the treasurer of the Grilling Society, a Navy ROTC student, a Catholic retreat leader, a student worker in the Alumni Relations office, and, obviously a tour guide for the office of admissions.”

That little blurb is how I begin every tour I give here at Georgetown. I guess you could say I am pretty involved here on campus, in addition to being an active member of our battalion. While this certainly stretches me thin at times, it has also given me one of the most fulfilling experiences I could have had during college. When I look back at my college experience, I don’t think I’m going to remember the different Netflix shows I juggled with my studies, but instead, I hope when I look back I get to see all of the people who have made these activities worthwhile.

My main group here on campus, the Grilling Society (GUGS), has made Georgetown feel like home for me. What started as casual involvement and loose affiliation bloomed into dedication and a year on the board. GUGS has provided this never-ending support system. Of course, our main activity is grilling burgers, but our mission is to form bonds and friendships forged in the very fires upon which we cook. And so not only has GUGS given me the ability make a mean burger, but GUGS has given me my best friends.

With all of these benefits to being a member (free food, great people, free food), I, of course, wanted to serve on the board. Serving as treasurer, I have had the opportunity to develop soft leadership. I am not the person calling the shots or the designated person in charge of every grill. That doesn’t mean, however, that I don’t lead. As a member of the Board, I am still responsible for developing and enforcing the culture of who we are and what we stand for. The opportunity to lead outside of positional authority has enabled me to focus on leadership through building relationships, a skill you can only learn through doing.

The best thing NROTC provides for us is the opportunity to be college students while pursuing a career in the Navy. Use that to your advantage, join a million clubs, explore what your school has to offer you, and make sure you are using every resource at your fingertips. Leadership is not only learned in a classroom; leadership is learned every day in all of our different activities—get out there and learn.

Get involved. Stay engaged. Be Inspired.
The Crisis Simulation experience was not only a unique, fun, and productive way for Midshipmen to apply what they knew about military ethics but also to get to know and bond with each other, including ones from other schools.

The drill helped to generally build our knowledge and understanding of real-world issues. This is especially relevant to us as Midshipmen, as we will end up dealing with similar socio-political and geopolitical issues to those dealt with in the simulation, throughout our military careers. It is important for us to understand the decision making and logic behind the foreign policy decisions of world leaders. This simulation helped us to do that just that, as we were put in the shoes of the decision makers who dominated global politics.

The activity allowed the participants to experiment with applying their own knowledge and beliefs to real-world issues in an educational environment. Similar to actors in a geopolitical simulator, we were forced to come up with creative, and unique ways to overcome challenges our nations faced. For example, in the drill I was a participant of, my country, The Red Country, was faced with an industrial crisis. We utilized an ally to overcome the challenge by outsourcing military production to their country. This action serves as an example of Midshipmen applying their real-world knowledge, while also having fun.

All in all, the Crisis Simulator was a productive, fun and enlightening activity. I am glad I had the opportunity to take part in such an event.
Mentorship is a process that occurs when less experienced individuals seek help or advice from a more experienced individual. The previous statement does not say anything about mentorship being between an older or younger individual, or between individuals differing in rank. While that is often the case it is not a requirement for mentorship to occur. Mentorship should also not be confused with routine check-ins from superior in the chain of command but is rather a more informal meeting where the mentor and the mentee can really get to know each other. A mentor should really understand the mentees thoughts, emotions, ideas, and aspirations. Knowing this will help mentors deliver quality mentorship.

More often than not, mentorship is initiated by the less experienced individual. This is because people often don’t know someone would like to improve in an area unless they vocally express their interests in doing so. This means that members seeking advice should not be afraid to reach out for help when they need it. Our unit encourages mentorship, and while you are assigned a mentor, you should not hesitate to ask any midshipmen for help when you need it. Mentorship ensures that battalion traditions of excellence are upheld long after midshipmen graduate and staff turns over. Mentorship allows midshipmen to leave a legacy with the battalion, and all midshipmen should welcome the chance to help develop a future leader.
In is hard enough to find a community while living in a city like D.C., but even more so when you attend a school as large as George Washington. While during my two and a half years at GW I have been able to find communities by being apart of groups like the Capital Battalion and GW’s club cross country team, I believe that the easiest and most filling way to gain a sense of community is through service. In my opinion there is no better way to become apart of a community than by donating both your time and effort to those around you. As a unit, we often try and extend our services to both our collegiate communities and to the fair city that we call home.

For example, earlier this year on September 21st, the entire Unit took part in an effort to clean up the National Mall by collecting trash and litter. The whole Unit meet at the Lincoln Memorial and swept the entire mall for trash, all the way down to the World War Two Memorial. Not only was this early morning activity a welcomed break from our normal routine, but it also allowed us to feel as if we were contributing to the wellbeing of our nation’s Capital. I truly enjoyed this activity, by being granted the opportunity to serve my community I felt grateful for knowing that I was able to help this community in a small way.